5: McKern E-5 (1927) 1929
NP12 Winnebago NP12

796 778 535 The shrine about which this ceremony centers is also a bundle, in this instance owned by one of the waiters, but not necessarily so. Its setting up followed a definite procedure. A small mound of sand was first heaped up on the grassy floor of the lodge. A wooden bowl was placed on the top center of the mound, and a tin bowl directly west of the mound. These were both filled with maple syrup. Four men placed handsful of tobacco at the base of each of the syrup containers. Then the bowl of syrup was removed from the mound, to be placed adjacent to the tin vessel, and from the open buffalo bundle a number of buffalo tail's were taken and placed upon the mound. Four small [823] eagle feathers, dyed red, were inserted in the margins of the mound to point in the four cardinal directions.

123 535 796 The leader, accompanied by musicians with rattles and one drummer, then sang one set of four songs. A dance song followed, practically everyone present joining in the dance, forming in line behind the leader and circling the lodge in a counter-clockwise direction. All the men were in the forepart of the line; the women followed the men. As the line was forming, several of the men urged the humble subscriber to this account to join the dance. Never before having witnessed the particular performance, I was entirely ignorant of the correct procedure, but realizing that this was a common dance in which anyone could participate without special preparation or careful observance of conduct, I, to my downfall, consented. I joined the line where it was forming immediately in front of me. The dance started before I became aware of my embarassing position; for whereas all the other men were grouped to comprise the leading half of the line, I was far back in the formation, distantly removed from the other representatives of my sex —dancing with the squaws. The shouts of merriment arising from both the men and women satisfied me, however, that I had not committed the unpardonable sin. Nevertheless, as soon as it was convenient, I corrected the error of my position.

796 535 As the line passed the bowls of syrup, the dancers each drank of the contents; the men from one bowl, the women from the other. The singing and dancing was continued until all the syrup was gone. Finally, the wooden bowl having been replaced on the sand altar, the leader approached it on hands and knees, mimicking the grunts and actions of a buffalo. He then proceeded to butt the bowl with his head, turning it over.

796 152 Speeches by the leader and by other prominent men brought the ceremony to a close.

781 My general reactions to the performance were two-fold. In the first place, I could not but be impressed by the exalted fervor of the other participants; at times tears coursed down the cheeks of Big Wave as he sang the spirit songs of his ancestors, and other participants showed the effect of strong emotion. Secondly, I beheld the ancient

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

Preface

There is only one way—to have a native himself give the account in his own mother tongue. The problem then resolves itself into finding the native. That is the task I set myself and through a piece of good luck I succeeded in accomplishing it. As the manner of its accomplishment is an interesting and illuminating story in itself, I hope I shall be excused for telling it in some detail.

In the year 1909 I commenced field investigations among the Winnebago Indians living on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River, about twenty-five miles south of Sioux City, Iowa. These Indians had the reputation of being fairly conservative. Perhaps the fact that a Presbyterian mission had in seventeen years succeeded in converting only one family, and a family which then unkindly died without leaving issue, may bear this out.

Among these Indians there lived a family named Blow Snake, consisting of a father and a fair number of children all grown up. Two of these were men quite well known in the tribe for a variety of reasons. These two became my principal informants. They had lived the most exciting of lives, for to the usual round of adventures that fall to the lot of most Indians of that region now, they had added a murder and a conversion, the murder first and the conversion afterwards. The older of the two seemed to be by far the more gifted. His memory was simply prodigious. He recounted to me a ceremony which took him two months, working practically six hours a day, to tell